



The Biloxi Breeze

Fall 2015



A Publication of the Gulf Coast Blind Rehabilitation Center
Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System

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Mission Statement

The mission of Blind Rehabilitation is to provide instruction to Veterans and military personnel who are blind or visually impaired. The goal is to promote independence, self-care, and improve overall quality of life.

Produced By

The Biloxi Breeze is a publication of the Gulf Coast Blind Rehabilitation Center (GCBRC).

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Gulf Coast BRC

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debra.gilley@va.gov.

Gulf Coast Blind Rehabilitation Center:

Vision Statement

To help Veterans and their families live more fulfilled and productive lives by providing the best rehabilitation experience possible. Veterans receive world-class rehabilitation with access to the latest technology and proven techniques for living with vision loss, surrounded by highly trained licensed and certified staff in a state-of-the-art program.

Values

Integrity, Commitment,
Advocacy, Respect, Excellence

Characteristics: "I Aced It"

Integrated, Attentive,
Compassionate, Encouraging,
Diligent, Independent,
Trustworthy

Message from the Chief



With the holiday season upon us, it is time to reflect on the year that is drawing to a close and be grateful for all the blessings here at the Gulf Coast Blind Rehabilitation Center. This past year has been filled with many great things. Here are just a few:

- the start of our CATs and Dogs program which is going strong,
- our gardening program hitting its full stride with one full year of planting and harvesting seasonal vegetables and fruits,
- earning our three-year accreditation as a rehabilitation facility,
- having two interns come through our program and

being awarded six intern slots for the upcoming year, and

- earning an overall 99+ percent satisfaction rating across the entire year on the anonymous survey taken by our Veterans upon discharge.

I am so grateful to be surrounded by specialists, medical staff, VIST Coordinators, staff, and ancillary staff who are all dedicated to the Veterans we serve and committed to helping them reach their goals. It takes a team working to together to make a place successful. They have the “I Aced It” characteristics of the GCBRC: Integrity, Attentive, Compassionate, Encouraging Diligent, Independent, and Trustworthy.

Take time to reflect on your year. I hope you have a long list of items for which to be grateful.

Happy holidays and wishes for a safe and happy new year!

*Debra Gilley, M.Ed., COMS, CLVT
Chief, Gulf Coast Blind
Rehabilitation Center*

MEET OUR STAFF

Staff Updates

This fall brought about a couple of changes to our staff.

Randy Kohl, who was with us for just about a year, had a beautiful baby with his wife and then moved on to another Blind Rehabilitation Center in order to be closer to their families. We miss him here, but wish him much success in his new position.

Nicole (Nikki) James, here at the GCBRC almost since we opened, first as an iCATs specialist and then as the CATs Supervisor, has also left. Nikki is pursuing her long-time dream of living and working in Alaska. She is on her way there as this newsletter is being developed, and we all hope it is everything she has ever imagined.

Their positions have been approved for backfilling, so we hope it won't be too long until

we are announcing new specialists.

Featured Staff:

Janette Burns

Janette Burns is the Nurse Manager for the GCBRC. She has been onboard with us since our doors opened in 2011, and we are glad that she heads up our nursing team.

After marrying and having children, Janette decided to go to college. She went to the University of Southern Mississippi and earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing while also being a mother to three small children. Janette then served in the Navy Reserves for three years.

With over 20 years of nursing experience now, Janette has spent all of her time at the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System in a variety of areas: nursing home staff nurse, home based primary care, home maker/home health aide nurse,

diabetes educator, outpatient clinic staff nurse and manager, Veterans health education coordinator, and MHV coordinator. This has given her a rich amount of knowledge to work with our Veterans.

Janette has lived on the Gulf Coast for over thirty years and enjoys running, kayaking, the beach, and spending time with her granddaughter. Janette has family members who have served in the Army, Navy, Marines, and Army Guard, and in the conflicts of World War II, Korea, and Desert Storm.

When asked, Janette said she works at VA “because I want to give back to those who gave so much for me. I consider it an honor and privilege to care for the nation’s Veterans. They are my heart.”

Manual Skills Update

*Nancy Shampo, M.Ed., COMS,
TVI Manual Skills Supervisor*

As I reflect on the summer, I am amazed at how quickly it has come and gone. It seems like yesterday we were planning the summer garden and preparing the beds for potatoes, tomatoes, beans, green peppers, and a variety of other vegetables. Now we are looking forward to shorter, cooler days, pleasant evenings and, of course, the day when we can turn the AC off and open the windows -- at least at my house we are!

The manual skills area has been busy submitting orders for supplies for the shop as well as the garden. Richard, our master gardener, is planning on planting broccoli, cauliflower, brussel sprouts, greens and fall tomatoes per the Veterans’ requests. The garden received adequate rain all summer, so the soil is ready to receive the autumn plants. We look forward to the cooler temps because with them the gnats, flies and other pests subside and leave us in peace.

With the close of summer came the end to preparing for our CARF Accreditation inspection and The Joint Commission inspection. We now have both of them behind us and with flying colors.

We look back on the past fiscal year and all of the successful events that took place and are quite pleased. We anticipate the new year with happy hearts and excitement as we move into new adventures.

We wish you happy holidays and much success in all you do.

Admissions Coordinator/CATs

*Michael "Andy" Amberson,
M.Ed., COMS, CLVT
Admissions Coordinator/CATs
Supervisor*

I hope everyone is having a good holiday season. In our last VIST Coordinator call we discussed the OrCam. This is a very useful device for individuals who need an Optical Character Reader (OCR). GCBRC received training

from the company in October, and we are able to train Veterans on the device and issue it when appropriate. There are many factors that determine the appropriateness of the OrCam for an individual. If you have any questions, give me a call. Currently, we have a select number of specialists who have been trained to teach the OrCam at this time, and we plan on expanding our staff of trainers.

I am announcing some changes in our Computer Access Training (CAT) Department. As stated earlier in the newsletter, Nikki James, who was the supervisor of CATs, is no longer with us, so I am now the supervisor of the CAT Department. In the past there was a supervisor over the CAT Department, and I was the supervisor of the iOS Department which handled training on the iPhone and iPads. Now, all of that training will fall under me in one department. All Veterans who come to the GCBRC will be assessed upon admission by their CATs specialist and the most appropriate device or devices will be determined. This will

include computer systems (Windows or Apple systems) or iOS devices, Apple TV, etc. Remember that the Veteran's goals determine the devices.

I will continue to be the Admissions Coordinator as well. Robin and I look forward to working on one team with Jean and Tim from now on. We all wish Nikki the best in her future endeavors. Feel free to give us a call if you have any questions.

Should I Upgrade to Windows 10?

*Tim Sniffen, CATIS
Computer Access Training
Specialist*

No.

Need more explanation?

Do you use Zoomtext? It doesn't work on Windows 10.

Do you use JAWS? It doesn't work on Windows 10 either.

Neither does Dolphin Guide. Or System Access.

Yet.

Paid upgrades to these products will work on Windows 10 at some point in the future and in some cases may even be available by the time you read this. But your existing copy of Zoomtext or JAWS won't work.

This is not to disparage Windows 10. It is a fine operating system. If you don't use any third party accessibility products, we may upgrade you to Windows 10 while you are at the Blind Rehabilitation Center, but even then we won't do so if you need Zoomtext or JAWS. Not until compatible versions of these products are available and tested.

Some Veterans currently admitted to the Blind Rehabilitation Center are using Windows 10. These Veterans only need 1.5X to 2X magnification to read the screen and use the 'pinch to zoom' touch screen feature as their main accessibility option. They may use the built-in Windows

screen reader, called Narrator to read a web article or a completed document in Microsoft Word from time to time, but they don't need to rely on a screen reader or screen magnifier to use their computers.

So, when you find the little 'Upgrade to Windows 10' icon in the bottom right area of your Windows 7 or Windows 8 screen, please ignore it. Please!

Lorrie's Corner

*Lorrie Bowen, CVRT
Living Skills Supervisor*

Holiday Food Safety Tips for you!

As we are getting ready for the holiday season, spending time with friends and family and attending parties, preparing various dishes for your family can be overwhelming. So, here are some tips from the Food and Drug Administration that I'd like to share to help you avoid **FOODBORNE ILLNESS**.

1. Planning: Plan your meal in advance; shopping early will ease the tension of your holiday meal.
2. Clean: The first rule of safe food preparation is to keep everything in the kitchen clean.

Wash your hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling any food.

Wash food contact surfaces with hot soapy water after preparing each food item and before going on to the next item (cutting boards, dishes, utensils, countertops).

Rinse fruits and vegetables thoroughly under cool running water and use a produce brush or a cloth to remove surface dirt. (I always have Veterans I instruct use their fingertips to feel the items to make sure no surface dirt is still on the item. I encourage you to do the same.)

Do not rinse raw meat or poultry before cooking. Washing these foods makes it more likely for bacteria to spread to areas around the sink and countertops.

3. Separate: Don't give bacteria the opportunity to spread from one food to another (cross-contamination).

Keep raw eggs, meat, poultry, seafood, and their juices away from foods that won't be cooked.

When you are using a cutting board for raw meat, poultry, and seafood, make sure you wash that cutting board before continuing with raw fruits and vegetables. Once you have cut and sliced your items, wash the cutting board again. If you have more than one cutting board, consider using one board for raw meat and one board for raw fruits and vegetables.

I always tell my Veterans "do not put cooked food that is

ready to eat on a plate or platter that has held any raw food items such as eggs, meat, poultry, seafood, or their juices. Make sure that plate or platter or cutting board has been washed thoroughly before putting cooked food on it."

4. Cook:

Always use your talking Digital Cooking Thermometer (if you had one issued to you). If you don't have one, contact your VIST Coordinator to order you one.

Use the talking thermometer to make sure meat, poultry, and fish are cooked to a safe internal temperature. Insert the thermometer into the innermost part of the food item. The thermometer will announce the temperature.

Don't eat uncooked cookie dough which may contain raw eggs.

5. Storing Leftovers: Always use a black marker and a white index card and write down the following:

- a. Name of the item
- b. Date stored

this way, you are able to identify the item and know when it was placed in the refrigerator or freezer.

Refrigerate leftovers and takeout foods within two hours.

Never defrost food at room temperature. Food can be defrosted safely in the refrigerator, under cold running water, or in the microwave. In our ADL kitchen class, we keep unused or uncooked food we have thawed for one night, but not over two nights. The item will be tossed if we don't use it before then. You may want to have that rule for yourself.

Food thawed in cold water or in the microwave must be cooked immediately.

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration; if it tastes bad, looks funny, or smells questionable, toss it. In our ADL kitchen class, I always say "use your fingertips to feel the food item and if it feels funny and you aren't for sure, toss it."

Finally, I always tell my Veterans, **LEFTOVERS SHOULD BE USED WITHIN THREE DAYS. AFTER THAT, TOSS IT OUT.** That is also the rule we use in the Veteran kitchen downstairs at the GCBRC. For further information here are some useful phone numbers:

FDA Food Information Line:
1-888-723-3366

USDA Meat and Poultry
Hotline:
1-888-674-6854

Apply these tips and relax and enjoy the holidays with your friends and family. Be safe and happy holidays!

3-2-1 Cake

Ken Breakey

Veteran Graduate

It's quite warm and toasty down here in Biloxi this summer. Though this project has the potential to become a large mess, it is a delicious way to beat the heat.

Ingredients:

- ❖ 1/2 cup milk
- ❖ 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- ❖ 1 tablespoon sugar
- ❖ 4 cups crushed ice
- ❖ 4 tablespoons salt
- ❖ 2 quart-size Ziploc bags
- ❖ 1 gallon-size Ziploc freezer bag
- ❖ 1 hand towel or gloves to keep your fingers from freezing as well!

Mix the milk, vanilla and sugar together in one of the quart size bags. Seal tightly, allowing as little air to remain in the bag as possible. Too much air left inside may force the bag open during shaking. Place this bag inside the

other quart size bag, again leaving as little air inside as possible and sealing well. By double-bagging, the risk of salt and ice leaking into the ice cream is minimized. Put the two bags inside the gallon size bag and fill the bag with ice, then sprinkle salt on top. Again, let all the air escape and seal the bag. Wrap the bag in the towel or put your gloves on, and shake and massage the bag, making sure the ice surrounds the cream mixture. Five to eight minutes is adequate time for the mixture to freeze into ice cream.

Tip: Freezer bags work best because they are thicker and less likely to leak.

Have fun!

Defining the CBI

Molly Mather, COMS

O&M Specialist

Here at the GCBRC, during all the months except the coldest winter months, a monthly Community Based Instruction

(CBI) outing is held with all Veterans and all Blind Rehabilitation Specialists. The CBI allows the Veterans to put newly learned skills, techniques, and devices into real-life use within the community for an entire day. The locations of the CBI change month to month and span across the Gulf Coast region. Previous CBIs have been to the Armed Forces Museum at Camp Shelby in Hattiesburg, Miss., the Naval Air Force Museum in Pensacola, Fla., the Mardi Gras parade and celebration in Biloxi, Miss., and to Gulf Islands National Seashore in Ocean Springs, Miss.

During the CBIs, the Veterans get the opportunity to socialize with fellow Veterans and staff, use their new devices, learn, and have fun! Whether we grill out, go fishing, get a tour of GI artifacts, or go to a Mardi Gras celebration, CBIs are always an adventure. Do you like to play “corn hole” or view wildlife in the natural habitat? Or perhaps

you enjoy history? If you come for training at the GCBRC, we look forward to you joining in on the fun outings that await you during your GCBRC experience!

Book Feast

*Belinda Taylor, CLVT, CVRT,
COMS*

Low Vision Therapist

Are you hungry for a great book? If so, visit one of the many book review sites loaded with a smorgasbord of reading genres. [GoodReads.com](https://www.goodreads.com) and [Bookpage.com](https://www.bookpage.com) are two websites focused on connecting readers with a satisfying book. Each site offers a variety of ways to join readers with great books full of flavor, written to indulge your cravings.

Once you find that perfect book to feast on, there are many ways to consume the content.

Magnification tools such as the stationary or portable CCTV devices can be used for reading your favorite novel. Engaging the line guide function provides a

line or window option to help you keep your place while reading.

Members of the Talking Book Program from the National Library Service can enter a title into the online catalog to check and see if the title is available through Talking Books or Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD). Available titles can be ordered from your affiliated Talking Books Library and accessed on your home player. The National Library Service offers the BARD app, which is used to download available titles directly from BARD. If you would like more information on the Talking Books program, contact your VIST Coordinator.

Don't forget your local library as a way to locate a great book. Most local libraries offer large print, eBooks and eAudio books for checkout and often provide book reviews on the library website. Visit your local library

and ask the librarian to show you the collection of large print books or demonstrate how to download a library book in text or audio format to your preferred portable device.

Here are a few book suggestions to feast on. Read the reviews and decide if it's a book for you! These titles are available from Talking Books to use with the audio player or for downloading to the BARD app. Enjoy your written feast!

[The Winter Sea](#) by Susanna Kearsley

[Flashback](#) by Nevada Barr

[The Fallen Man](#) by Tony Hillerman

[Legacy](#) by Danielle Steel

Enjoy your book feast!

Recreational Therapy

Shondra Davis, CTRS
Recreational Therapist

The holiday season is in full gear in Recreation! This season brings out tons of volunteers and organizations that want to thank the Veterans for service and make sure they are honored.

We kicked off Veterans Day with the annual trip sponsored by Riemann Funeral Home to the World War II museum in New Orleans. The Veterans started out early in the morning with police escorts and a chartered bus headed to New Orleans for a full day of touring the museum.

We continued the season with the Veteran's Day Parade in Gulfport. Veterans had a front row seat. They were able to be honored and shook hands with other Veterans during the parade and ceremony. They also attended a Veterans Day Breakfast and Ceremony at a local high school. The Veterans

were so impressed with the program that they sent a thank you note to the high school for their hard work and dedication in honoring Veterans. We were also awarded an Ambucs tricycle for the Veterans to use for recreation during the ceremony at Point Cadet in Biloxi.

The season will continue to include many opportunities for community reintegration for the Veterans during November and December.

I encourage all Veterans to participate in recreational opportunities, and I welcome any ideas of interest.

Last, but not least, I would like to personally thank all the volunteers and organizations for everything they do for the Veterans of the GCBRC. Your actions do not go unnoticed and are greatly appreciated!

Happy Holidays!

Nursing Corner:

Health Myths and Facts

Debora Copeland, LPN

Myth: Heart disease is for men, and cancer is the real threat for women.

Fact: Heart disease is a killer that strikes more women than men, and is more deadly than all forms of cancer combined. While one in 31 American women dies from breast cancer each year, heart disease claims the lives of one in three. That's roughly one death each minute.

Myth: Heart disease is for old people.

Fact: Heart disease affects women of all ages. For younger women, the combination of birth control pills and smoking boosts heart disease risks by 20 percent. While the risks do increase with age, things like overeating and a sedentary lifestyle can cause plaque to

accumulate and lead to clogged arteries later in life. But, even if you lead a completely healthy lifestyle, being born with an underlying heart condition can be a risk factor.

Myth: Heart disease doesn't affect women who are fit.

Fact: Even if you're a yoga-loving, marathon-running workout fiend, your risk for heart disease isn't completely eliminated. Factors like cholesterol, eating habits and smoking can counterbalance your other healthy habits. You can be thin and have high cholesterol. The American Heart Association recommends you start getting your cholesterol checked at age 20 or earlier, if your family has a history of heart disease. And, while you're at it, be sure to keep an eye on your blood pressure at your next check-up.

Myth: I don't have any symptoms.

Fact: Sixty-four percent of women who die suddenly of coronary heart disease had no previous symptoms. Because these symptoms vary greatly between men and women, they're often misunderstood. Media has conditioned us to believe that the telltale sign of a heart attack is extreme chest pain. But, in reality, women are somewhat more likely to experience shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting and back or jaw pain. Other symptoms women should look out for are dizziness, lightheadedness or fainting, pain in the lower chest or upper abdomen and extreme fatigue.

Myth: Heart disease runs in my family, so there's nothing I can do about it.

Fact: Although women with a family history of heart disease are at higher risk, there's plenty you can do to dramatically reduce it. Simply create an action plan to keep your heart healthy.

Because of healthy choices and knowing the signs, more than 627,000 women have been saved from heart disease, and 330 fewer are dying per day. What's stopping you from taking action?

Avoid Excess Weight Gain During the Holidays

*Jane Osowski, PhD, RD
GCBRC Dietitian*

Typically throughout the festive fall and winter months many of us experience weight gain from celebrating with friends and family, attending social events and eating holiday party foods and treats. In addition, usual routines are changed to accommodate more events which interrupt workout and exercise routines which can also contribute to weight gain. You may think there isn't any harm to gaining a few pounds over the holidays, but, in reality, research shows that those few pounds

often are not lost later and then year after year of a “few” pounds can lead to becoming overweight or obese.

Here are some strategies you can adopt to help avoid those extra pounds, but yet still enjoy the holiday season.

- Include protein in your meals or snacks.

Protein can help maintain a healthy weight because protein provides a feeling of satiety, helping you feel full and staying full longer. Protein can also help maintain normal blood glucose levels, helping avoid a drop in blood sugar which can lead to excess snacking.

Some examples of protein rich snacks include Greek yogurt, low-fat cottage cheese, almonds, eggs and edamame.

- Don't skip meals to SAVE calories for later.
It's important to eat regularly to fuel your body for any type

of activity. Just as you can't drive your car without fuel, your body can't run without the proper fuel. Going prolonged periods without eating can lead to eating more than you expected later, defeating your goal. Meals can be pared down to save calories for later, but eat throughout the day.

- Chew slowly.
Savor the tasty treats by chewing slowly. It takes our stomach 20 minutes to tell our brain that we're full. Many of us have overeaten because we eat quickly and haven't allowed our body to “tell” us to stop until it is too late. Practice mindful eating every day, including during the holidays.
- Fill up on fiber.
When you are filling up your plate at the appetizer table or the dinner table, don't forget to choose foods high in fiber such as vegetables, bean dips

and fruits. High fiber foods help keep us fuller longer, and they contain important nutrients like antioxidants.

- Enjoy your favorites.
This is the time of year when special foods and treats are served. If you have a favorite, go ahead and enjoy it. The important thing to remember is eating in moderation. Try to have a small amount to enjoy the taste. Split the serving with a friend to enjoy the taste without overindulging. Plan ahead that you will be eating higher calorie, sugar, and fat foods and have lighter meals and snacks throughout the day. If you give in to your cravings, but are mindful about limiting the amount, you may avoid overeating or a feeling of being deprived.
- Get moving!
Keep activity on your schedule throughout the festive months. It's a great way to enjoy the treats and

burn the extra calories. If you are able, go for a walk after meals and enjoy the cooler weather and fresh air. It will help clear your mind and prevent some of the weight from sneaking up on you during the holidays.

From the Front Desk

*Veronica Johnson,
Medical Support Assistant*

The front desk serves as a meet/greet, lost/find for others, but mainly as a service to our Veterans here at the GCBRC.

When our Veterans arrive here at the GCBRC, they are greeted at the front desk where they are admitted into the program. The Veteran is asked to verify any and all information entered into the demographic records. This information is very important as it relates to the Veteran's home information and emergency contact/next-of-kin.

If the Veteran has had long travel or late hours of arrival, a food tray is ordered if the Veteran is hungry and wants or needs to be fed.

Some employees joke about the Front Desk being the “gate-keeper,” which is not far from the truth. The building’s location is one of the first that people see. This leads to high traffic. Many people who enter the building are lost on campus and need directions. People are questioned about their business in the building, because we safeguard our Veterans while they stay here at the GCBRC.

The Veterans are informed of additional things they need to know while staying at the center:

- Calling outside of VA is free to the Veteran
- Mailing falls under the “Free Matter for the Blind/Physically Handicapped” Postal Manual; they can send mail out without pay

- For bill paying, there is assistance for the Veteran with his presence and consent for help.
- Contact phone information for business, family, etc.
- This list goes on and on as the needs for our Veterans arise.

The front lobby offers a warm welcome to our Veterans and visitors.

There is an Information Center that offers brochures for understanding the Visual Impaired as well as newsletter and showcases from each department which display the various assistive devices and prosthetics as well as items created by Veterans.

We have a very good maintenance department. They are proficient about attending to whatever is needed, inside and out at the Center, in order to keep a safe environment for our Veterans. While O&M (orientation and mobility) requires outside travel, the

building's surrounding upkeep is important, again for the safety of our Veterans.

Once the Veteran has completed the program, he or she is offered a "Veteran Experience Questionnaire." This anonymous questionnaire allows the Veteran to freely voice his or her opinion of the overall outcome of the program. Many Veterans enter Blind Rehabilitation for the first time uneasy, weary and not knowing what to expect. The outcome is remarkable when you observe Veterans after a few days, and then see the difference when they complete their training program and have spent time around others that understand what they are facing or going through.

Upon completion of the program, the Veteran's travel home is just as important. If a Veteran is traveling via airline, special requests are given for that Veteran's needs, mostly being "aid/attendance" to ensure the travel is treated

accordingly and there is someone to assist with transfers between flights, etc. in order that the Veteran arrives safely. For ground travel, many Veterans have family and friends pick up them up and all is well. Our VA Shuttle is another method of transportation often used to return the Veteran home. Our shuttles run between Mobile and Pensacola and are usually available for Veterans wanting to go home for the weekend as well. Sometimes, upon discharge, the Veteran is able to be delivered directly to the Veteran's front door.

I'm proud to work as a Veteran serving Veteran. There are many others at this facility.

Caregivers

*Susan M. Guillory, LCSW, MVF-CSW, VHA-CM
VIST Coordinator, GCVHCS*

November was National Family Caregivers Month. Many of you are caregivers to spouses, disabled children or other family

members, and so I wanted to share some tips for caregivers. I also ask that you share this information with your family members as they may assist in your care or be the caregiver for others. In my experience working with caregivers, the following tips have always been helpful and brought out interesting discussion, so consider each tip and think about how it applies to you.

Ten Tips for Family Caregivers

1. Choose to **take charge** of your life, and don't let your loved one's illness or disability always take center stage.
2. Remember to **be good to yourself**. Love, honor and value yourself. You're doing a very hard job and you deserve some quality time, just for you.
3. **Watch out** for signs of depression, and don't delay getting professional help when you need it.
4. When people offer to help, **accept the offer** and suggest specific things they can do.
5. **Educate yourself** about your loved one's condition. Information is empowering.
6. There's a difference between caring and doing. **Be open to technologies and ideas** that promote your loved one's independence.
7. **Trust your instincts**. Most of the time they'll lead you in the right direction.
8. Grieve for your losses, and then allow yourself to **dream new dreams**.
9. **Stand up for your rights** as a caregiver and a citizen.
10. **Seek support** from other caregivers. There is great strength in knowing you are not alone.

Taken from:

<http://www.familycaregiving101.org/manage/tips.cfm> ©2004

National Family Caregivers Association and the National Alliance for Caregiving

CAREGIVER SUPPORT LINE
 1-855-260-3274

eConnect

*Susan M. Guillory, LCSW, MVF-CSW, VHA-CM
VIST Coordinator, GCVHCS*

Do you receive the “eConnect” electronic newsletter from Hadley School for the Blind? If you aren’t receiving this newsletter, you may want to check it out! The eConnect newsletter has beneficial seminars that are absolutely free. Recent seminars included “Adventure Sports” and “iFocus 12: Tips on Using the Vision Accessibility Features in iOS.”

Go to
<http://hadley.edu/eNewsletter.asp> to sign up for this free service.

VIST Support Groups

Pensacola VIST Support Group

1 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month. For additional information contact Scott Turner, VIST Coordinator, at (850) 912-2552.

Biloxi, Miss., VIST Support Group

10 a.m. on the third Thursday of each month in the GCBRC Dining Room.

You can also follow Hadley School for the Blind on:



Facebook and Twitter

GCBRC Admissions Statistics Update:

*Michael “Andy” Amberson,
M.Ed., COMS, CLVT
Admissions Coordinator*

Total admissions for FY 2015-2016:

33 CATS Referrals

98 Dual Referrals

26 regular referrals

15 special programs referrals

Total in the year 172

Current wait times are 45 to 60 days. The longer wait times are referrals for CATs only.

Mobile, Ala., VIST Support Group

10 a.m. on the second Wednesday of each month in the 6th floor group room. For additional information on the Biloxi and Mobile support groups, contact Susan Guillory, VIST Coordinator, at (228) 385-6762.

Know Your VIST

The Visual Impairment Service Team Coordinators are your case managers for blind rehabilitation care and services and your first contact when you need to enroll or apply for a program. Whether it be your first admission to the BRC, a special program to meet unique needs or a refresher program, these representatives are important to your success. The following is the current updated list for the South Central VA Health Care Network VIST Coordinators.

VIST COORDINATOR	LOCATION
Adrienne Thompson (713) 791-1414 ext. 25398	Michael E. DeBakey VAMC 2002 Holcombe Blvd. (580/112-C VISOR) Houston, TX 77030
Marcia Harris (713)791-1414 ext. 25327	Michael E. DeBakey VAMC 2002 Holcombe Blvd. (580/112-C VISOR) Houston, TX 77030
Harold Miller (601) 364-1551	G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center 1500 E. Woodrow Wilson Dr. Jackson, MS 39216
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**FREE MATTER FOR
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PART 135**